



ROCKLAND ENERGY COMMITTEE

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen and Citizens of the Town of Rockland:

Together with our partners, the Rockland Energy Committee has continued to make great progress for our town over the past year, which has set the stage for even greater success as we keep working to advance our collective goals of becoming an all-around sustainable, energy-efficient community.

In November 2009, on the heels of the construction of the new solar array at the Rockland High School, the Committee identified yet another opportunity to bring renewable energy power to the town and our schools through federal stimulus grant funding made available by the state's Department of Energy Resources (DOER). In partnership, once again, with the school department, board of selectmen and our partners in federal and state government, the Committee applied for \$150,000 in grant funding to build a similar-sized solar array on the roof of the Esten Elementary School.



Technical expertise: Energy Committee members Phil Wood and Jim Paul survey and assess the roof of the Esten Elementary School for solar panels

After receiving notification that the town had been awarded the grant last February, members of the Energy Committee, along with the school department, spent the first part of the year preparing bid requirements and project specifications in accordance with federal stimulus grant requirements and state procurement laws. To our benefit, we quickly learned that the costs of solar panels and other equipment associated with the project had significantly decreased in the few short months since the high school project was completed. Because of these changes in pricing, the solar array atop the Esten School is about 5kW larger than the array at the high school, though it cost about \$30,000 less.

The project—which will save between \$4,000 and \$6,000 annually in energy costs for the school—was completed just before the start of the new school year. Similar to that of the high school, program components of the array include grade-specific curriculum tools for students at the Esten School, which teachers there have already embraced. Residents can keep up-to-date with the daily and lifetime energy output of the solar array, its status and history on the Energy Committee’s homepage, found at: www.rockland-ma.gov.



Solar at-a-glance: A snapshot of the completed array, constructed by Fall River Electrical Associates

Looking at more ways to creatively bring renewable energy to Rockland and save the town money, the Energy Committee has also been working with our colleagues in town government to explore the possibility of constructing a solar panel farm at the former landfill on Beech Street through a power purchase agreement (PPA).

Such an agreement, which aligns with the Commonwealth’s new Green Communities law, would allow the town to lease space at the landfill to a renewable energy developer, who would, in turn, sell the energy back to the town at a steeply-discounted rate. Recently, a number of local communities and businesses—including Canton, Carver, Kingston, Natick, and even Patriot Place in Foxboro—have begun exploring and entering into these agreements to meet their energy goals and cut costs. In the coming months, we look forward to working with the selectmen, the board of health, the planning and zoning boards and residents to explore this opportunity more carefully.

Over the past year, our Committee has also worked closely with fellow town and state leaders to investigate the state’s new Green Communities Designation Program, and discuss the potential of Rockland being designated as a *Green Community*. While earning this designation would allow the town to be eligible for additional state funding to help us reach our goals to become a more energy-efficient community, it first requires that the town meet five qualification criteria to demonstrate its commitment to this work. These include: 1) designating as-of-right siting for renewable energy generation, research and development, or manufacturing facilities; (2) adopting an expedited application and permit process for as-of-right energy facilities; (3) establishing benchmarks for energy use and reduction by 20%; (4) purchasing only fuel-efficient vehicles (with exceptions); (5) and adopting the new stretch code for construction projects.

Our Committee extends a special thanks of appreciation to Bob Rice, a member of the Planning Board and Rockland’s representative to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), who has worked closely with us and a number of town leaders to discuss and work towards meeting these criteria. We look forward to continue working with Bob and all town residents to reach these and all of our shared goals around these efforts.

As a committee we also understand that so much of our success would not have been possible if not for a number of people who have worked with us, and have been great friends and partners with us over the past four years. As one of our partners at the State House, former State Representative Bob Nyman, who unexpectedly passed away in June, was a tireless advocate for Rockland and was always there to help our Committee in any way he could. We appreciate all that Bob did for us, and also look forward to working with our new state representative, Rhonda Nyman, wishing her all the best in her new role. Upon moving to Hanover, Heidi Hosmer, one of our original members, had to resign from the Energy Committee. In addition to making a great chili for our booth at the Holiday Stroll in our first year, Heidi was an invaluable member of the Committee, and we hope that she will continue to be a familiar face in Rockland, even though she's now just over the border. Former State Senator Michael Morrissey and Congressman Bill Delahunt have also set out in new endeavors during the past few months, and we also thank them for their constant insight and all they did to help us advance our goals.

As always, our Committee greatly appreciates the widespread and ongoing support we've received from the board of selectmen, school committee, town department heads and all town residents. We look forward to making continued progress for the town and the residents of our wonderful community in the months and years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Mullen, Jr.

Rockland Energy Committee

Carol Perilli, Chair

James Paul, Vice-Chair

Michael Mullen, Jr., Secretary

Frank DelPrete

Steve Johnson

Phil Wood